

# Think twice before 'rescuing' young wildlife

*DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife recommends, 'If you care, leave them there'*

**DOVER** – Whether in their own backyards or while taking a walk outdoors, Delawareans are likely to encounter young wildlife this time of year. While some young animals appear to be abandoned, usually they are not. In most cases, their mothers are watching over them somewhere nearby and waiting for you to move on. The Division of Fish & Wildlife reminds well-meaning Delawareans that when encountering young wildlife, regardless of species, the best thing you can do is to leave the animals alone.

Many wildlife species, including white-tailed deer, leave their young while they forage for food, visiting the young only a few times a day. This tactic, in addition to the young's natural instinct to lay quietly while waiting for its parent to return, actually helps protect the young from predators by drawing less attention to them.

Removing or handling wildlife in any way can be harmful to both humans and wildlife. Precautions to take with both juvenile and adult wild animals include: If you see a young wild animal alone, watch from a distance to see if its mother returns, which could take several hours.

- Be aware that wild animals can be unpredictable and sometimes dangerous, especially if they are in pain.
- Wild animals can carry parasites or diseases that can affect you or your pets, such as fleas, ticks, or rabies.
- Remember that it is illegal to raise or keep any wild animal in Delaware.

If a young wild animal appears injured or you are certain its parent is dead, please contact the Division of Fish & Wildlife during business hours Monday-Friday at 302-739-9912, or after hours and weekends at 800-523-3336, to determine the appropriate course of action, not only for your own safety, but also to help ensure the best possible outcome for the wild animal. Taking a wild animal from the wild is almost certainly ensuring it will not survive, so DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife advises, "If you care, leave them there."

*Follow the Division of Fish & Wildlife on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/DelawareFishWildlife>.*

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